

Hawthorn Hill

Tuesday night, April 7, 1926¹

I am sorry, dear, that you have to have so much uncertainty and anxiety over your work. But I am so glad it came now. It will be a better time for you to change if you have to make a change. I feel this way about it, dear. I am not one bit afraid for you to try Washington or any thing on you won't hook. I have always thought it was rather selfish of The Star not to have you and Roy Roberts writing under your own names. Your name should certainly be on that editorial page some way. But facts are facts and we have to get along with it. I do not think you would have any trouble making yourself known as an able, accurate, keen and altogether responsible writer. Of course I do not know the field and how keen the competition would be. You know so much more about that, dear, than I do, that I wouldn't presume to give you any advice. But what I think is this. You have been looking forward to doing work of that sort and have thought you would like to do it. Well, if things are not promising, for any reason, on The Star, why not make the break now and try it? I'll stay by you on it, dear. And I'm not afraid you can't make it go. When I think of the comparison between you and these men who are at the top, as you say – well, you certainly can hold your own with them and “then some”! I mean that, dear. I can see you are at some little disadvantage because your name isn't so well known now but in a few years it will be well-known. The only reason I didn't urge you more strongly to make the break now is that I can see you hate to leave The Star and K.C. I understand that and if it happens that conditions are at all pleasant there after the sale, I can see no objection to your saying. You know Mr. K. and Mr. S. and you know how it is to work with them. One never finds ideal conditions any where. It won't be ideal in Washington, of course. But one never gets very far always working for some one else. I would give a good deal just to have you independent and doing work for yourself. I would say that if Mr. K. shows a disposition to be appreciative and liberal and if he gets control and if your feeling is that you would feel more comfortable and happier to stay – do it. But, dear, don't be a bit upset if the paper should get out of your hands or if you see that it will be difficult to stay. You aren't depend upon that paper or upon that selfish family that thought only of themselves. You are young enough yet to do some thing else and we can build up some thing together, dear. You are devoted to the paper, dear, and I know it will hurt you to let that editorial page get out of your hands but if things change so that your old place really doesn't exist any more, there is really nothing to do but let it go and see about getting settled into something else. I do not know about the wisdom of investing in it. I would have thought at first that it would be a good investment. But now I don't feel so certain – what with Mr. K's coxsureness and so on. Still, I can see that you will have a much better chance if you invest but you'd want to be pretty certain of staying on for good, I should think, before you put money into the paper. Some way I feel differently again about Mr. K. from the various things you have said. I have swung back more to my original impression of him, which is that he is a “society” man and a son-in-law. But you know him, dear. I don't suppose there will be any great change in him now any more if he is forty-seven or forty-eight years old.

I think, dear, you can afford to be decently independent. We won't be stumped at all if you can't come to satisfactory terms with the new management – whatever it is. If it were not that your life has been put into The Star and if I were not afraid you would be worried and on a strain if you struck out for yourself in Washington, I would say be very independent. But I am not afraid to have you strike out for yourself, dear. I feel sure you would soon be established and that you would enjoy it. But down deep in my heart, I feel that you can never do better work than what you have been doing – I mean, for other people – for the world. On your own account, it might easily be better to go to Washington. And then you know, dear, you haven't tried any thing yet. Double day Page and son on. When I see what

¹ Katharine mis-dates this letter. It was actually written on April 6, 1926.

White and Allen have done in small towns, and Ed Howe and Murdock, why you could do some thing like that for yourself, dear. I would love to have you independent, dear. We will be, before long, if we get a chance. We don't need to have so many things, dear, but I don't want you to be working for some one else always. I have had a little glimpse into what a thankless task it is.

Now I've sat on the fence, with my fee dangling on one side on then on the other! If you can guess which way I would jump, you know more than I do. All of which means that I can see advantages and disadvantages on both sides and I couldn't judge for you – not for a second. I'll be satisfied with whatever you decide, dear. I want you to have happy conditions for working. That is all. And I love you a good deal, too, and if I could, I'd put my arms around your neck and give you a sweet kiss.

Your Katharine